

April 10, 2025

To Members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

I write to oppose parental fees for TEFRA and disability waivers, as proposed in HF2434.

My husband and I are the parents of a 5.5-year-old autistic son who receives essential therapy and support services through TEFRA. TEFRA makes it possible for our son to access the help he needs — therapy that supports his language development, safety awareness, emotional regulation, and daily living skills. These are not optional services — they are critical for his well-being, and for our family's stability.

We initially paid the parental fees when applying for TEFRA, and I can honestly say it was a major burden on our household budget. I am unable to work outside the home because of the high level of care our son needs. My husband is employed full-time, but we are a single-income family with multiple financial responsibilities: a mortgage based on that income, car payments, childcare for our younger child, and sports activities for our older children. Like many families, we are also saving for higher education. None of these expenses are excessive — they are the normal costs of raising a family, especially one that includes a child with disabilities.

Families should not have to pay to access the help their disabled children need to thrive. Even if a family earns 675% of the federal poverty level, this does not mean they are financially secure enough to absorb additional costs. These fees are regressive and harmful — they punish families for doing everything they can to support their child while already shouldering incredible emotional, physical, and financial strain.

We also need TEFRA in order to access a CDCS waiver that allows me, as his mother, to become a paid parent caregiver. This is the only realistic path to both caring for him and contributing to our household. Bringing back parental fees would create a massive barrier to this support.

I urge you to oppose the reinstatement of parental fees. Once reinstated, they are likely to expand and harm families who are already doing everything they can to provide care for their children with disabilities.

Please keep parental fees out of TEFRA and waivers. Our children, and our families, deserve better.

Sincerely,
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